

A

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, February 12. 1712.

WHEN our Foreign Accounts brought us the strong Reasons and powerful Arguments of the Princes Abroad, against the entering into a Treaty of Peace, they look'd to some People here, very Plausible and Pungent; and the Advocates for Reducing France by carrying on the War, had much to say; nor do I blame any of them, who in the abundance of their Ignorance fill'd us with their great Calculations of the Forces of the Confederates, and how Formidable they would appear in the War, because I believe they spoke their Thoughts.

But when these honest Men told us, the

Emperor would bring such vast Armies into the Field, of which the Lists taken from the Prints, reckoned up above 90000 Men, did they know, or at least remember, that the Quota which the Emperor Engag'd for at the Grand Alliance, was 91000 Men? And that all the present Emperor promises therefore, is no more than what his Father, and Brother, *if they had been Honest*, should have done before; *if they had known this*, they would have chang'd their Note, and instead of telling us what great Things this Emperor would do, what Efforts he would make, and what Troops he would bring into the Field, they would have said,

—That

— That now we ought to be Encourag'd to the War, because, tho' the former Emperors had abus'd us, this would be Honest, and perform his Conditions ; to which, I think, we shoud do well to Answer ; Let the Court at Vienna refund the Expence of what they have been Defic't in first, and then we may believe their New Promises, otherwise, they have Cheated us once, and it was their Faults — And let those that would have us Trust them again, tell us, *Whose Fault will the second Cheat be ?*

For my part, I am against Retrospects and Reflections, neither do I see any Room for them at Home : The last Ministry labou'red under this Grievance, and I dare say did all they could to Redress it, the making it publick, and refusing to go on unless it were Redress'd, excepted ; and I will not say that was a Fault neither, nor do I see that any blame lies at their Door for it, as Things might be Circumstanc'd at that Time : But now it is publick, and that the whole World sees it, I think we must be Drunk if we go on with the War upon the same Foot again ; if the War must go on, I hope it will be put upon a just Foot of Equalities and Proportions, and if this be done, we may see perhaps, that as the first Expence rises up from three Millions and half, or four Millions of Yearly Expence, to seven, so we may reduce it a little, and bring it back from 7 Millions to 3 or 4 again, and yet carry it on as effectually, and perhaps more effectually than before ; And then there will be much more to be said for carrying on the War than there is now, tho' 'tis likely, when they come to pay the full Expence, they will be in more hast to put an End to the Matter than they are now.

And here I cannot refrain from looking off from the Affair at Home, to the Princes of the Alliance Abroad, for tho' our People at Home might speak Ignorantly, and by Prejudice of Parties, yet Abroad it cannot be so ; how pleasant then upon us does it sound, tho' the rest be Melancholly enough, to hear the Emperor, in his Letter

to the States-General, press them to prevent the Artifices of France prevailing in England, to put a stop to the War — When he ought to look back, and see how the Artifices of Vienna have been put upon the English Courts, to carry on the War at so vast and unequal Expence, and to furnish not their Agreed Quota's only, but even pay the Emperor and the Portuguese Subsidies for their own Troops, and they not appear neither, sed in Nubibus — And with what Face can those People ask us to do the same again ? Or think it sufficient amends, to say, *We will be better Boys for the future* — No, no, Messieurs, pay us the Arrears, and Ballance the Accounts of Quota's and Proportions with Us, if you would have Us go on again, or appear in the Field for 2 or 3 Year, with your mighty Armies you speak of, without us ; Augment your Troops above your Quota's, in Proportion to what they have been deficient, and then you may spare us for that 2 or 3 Years, that we may have a little Breathing Time as well as you — Nor is this speaking at all in behalf of France neither ; for let but the Emperor, the Empire, the King of Portugal, and the other Confederates for the Year now to come, bring but into the Field the full Quota of Troops, which they were Engag'd to bring from the first of the War, and there shall not be a Man there less than has been before, tho' not a Regiment of our Men should March.

But lest it should be objected, they cannot find Troops, and this would give France the Advantage, it lies full against them ; *Pay our Troops, those we send, and those we have bin'd, and let them serve us before* ; this would be something towards Justice, and if the War holds on three Year more, we shall come in fresh, and give a Finishing Stroke to it : Either this is equal and fair, or it is not — If it be not, I should be glad to hear some Protestant Arguments against it ; and to give the Champions of the War Time for it, I shall call another Cause for a while.

MISCELLANEA.

WHILE foreign Knavery is the Subject of every-body's Discourse, and the Parliament is Employ'd in letting us into the Secret, of how we have been abus'd by our Allies ; pray, Gentlemen, will you allow an Author to dive a little into the Secret of some of our Frauds and Abuses, relating chiefly to Matters of Trade, which however call loudly upon us for immediate Redress, and which, not knowing how long the Liberty of speaking publickly is to last, I can omit no longer, lest it should be too late.

In Matters of Trade, I hope Parties have no Concern ; every one is alike concern'd there, to put his helping Hand, as they would to quench a Fire when it is in their Neighbour's House : Trade knows no Whig or Tory ; no Party-Prejudices are Concern'd there ; every Man in his right Senses, is for Promoting Manufactures, Encouraging probable Adventures, Employing the Poor, Consumption of the Produce, Encrease of Navigation, Supporting general Commerce, preventing Destructive Combinations, Suppressing Monopolies, and the like ; and therefore while I am upon a Subject of this Nature, I hope for all your Attention.

In Prosecution of this, I must enter a little upon several Branches of Trade, needful, nay, indeed absolutely necessary to be taken into Consideration at this Time ; such as the Abuses upon both the Queen and the Merchant, in the Affair of taking Bonds at the Custom-House for the high Duties upon Tobacco, by which Method, as I shall make it appear, many Innocent Men are Ruin'd, Flourishing Merchants made Bankrupt, and the Queen notoriously Cheated, being made to pay many Thousand Pounds by Debentures, for Goods which she never receiv'd any Duty for

Inward —— The like Cheat I shall give some hints of, in the Exportation of Brass and Brass-Works, which I hear is now upon Debate, and some other Things equally needful.

I know I must be very Chary how I say a Word about the South-Sea-Trade, because that is become a Member of our Party-Divisions ; but I may take the Liberty, perhaps, to tell you, that even this South-Sea-Trade will be a New Advocate, and will furnish Unanswerable Reasons, why the Trade to AFRICA should be settled in a Company ; and therefore I would advise all the Separate Traders to be against the South-Sea Trade, Right or Wrong ; and much may be said, to prove the African Trade absolutely necessary, to the Support and carrying on a Trade to the South-Seas, even so necessary, that it is not easie to say, how the Trade to the South-Seas can be carried on without it ; and something may occur, to prove the South-Sea-Trade necessary also to the African Trade ; but of all these in their course.

Limitations and Regulations in the opening a French Trade, in case of a Peace, may take up a part of my Design in this Affair, if I am allowed Time to go on.

But I must reserve a little part of this Review, to speak a Word or two, to a Case now before the House of Commons, the Cheat of which, I believe, few Understand, and many will wonder at when they hear of it, being so notorious in its kind, but gilded over with a specious Pretence of Charity and Christianity, carried on by Magistracy, and Conceal'd from the Authority they apply to. This relates to a Bill for Settling the Keel-Men's Hospital at Newcastle. And as I have no Gain to make by speaking, nor any other End, but meer Charity to the Poor, Sense of Liberty,

and

and detecting a horrid Plot upon near two Thousand Innocent Families, as well as upon Trade, I speak with the more Freedom; and as to the Truth of what I say, I am ready to vouch every Word of it.

The Keel-Men of Newcastle are a Sett of poor, laborious, hard-working Men, that take as much Pains for their Bread, and get it at as much Hazard, as most Men in this Nation; their Busines is to fetch Coals in large Boats, like Lighters, from the Stebs, or Wharfs, and carry them to the Ships in the River Tyne, who bring them to London — And without their Labour, the Coal Trade could not be carried on.

The Plot upon them is not only to Rob, but to Enslave them, and the Enslaving them, will, in Consequence, make an absolute Monopoly of the Coal Trade again; a Thing, which the last Parliament, and the last Ministry struggled hard with before, and which this very Parliament Overthrew in their last Session, but is now to be re-viv'd, under a Secret and unheard of Con-

Spiracy against Law, against Reason, against English Liberty, against Right, and against Charity; I say this with the more Freedom, because they expect that the Parliament shall be drawn in to do their Work for them, and the poor innocent and Injur'd Men having none to succit, none to undertake their Cause, neither Money or Friends; the specious out-side may deceive a Parliament of any Thing but Angels; I doubt not the Parliament will Resent their being thus impos'd upon, when they shall hear the Truth of it; and I only wish the House of Commons, whose Ears are always open to Justice and Right, would find out some Method to have the poor Men free from the Threatenings and Wheedlings that have been us'd to Extort a Petition from them, Represent their own Case to them, and then they would see the Thing to be quite different from what is laid before them.

I shall give the true State of the Case in my next.

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